



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW



The cobia have arrived! They were biting throughout the lower bay and especially at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel this past week. Keith Cole landed this 105-pound, 2-ounce cobia (see picture) from the Bluefish Rock area on June 8th. This is great news for the upcoming cobia tournaments, to include the Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament June 19-20 and Wallace's Bait and Tackle's Cobia Tournament July 11th!

At the Light Towers, spadefish action has improved as well. The normal summer mixed bag can be found throughout the area, including croaker, spot, bluefish, sea mullet, and speckled trout. Drum, both black and red, were still reported, but that excitement has definitely died down compared to recent weeks. Offshore action is showing signs of improvement with catches of yellowfin tuna and dolphin. Have a great week of fishing!

THE FISHING REPORT

Onancock

Captain Wil reports normal summer bottom fishing in Onancock. Croaker, averaging 12 to 14 inches, are evenly spread out in the area. A few spot, small bluefish, and small grey trout are also mixed in. In the evenings, around the local islands, speckled trout and red drum can be found. The few anglers targeting black drum had decent catches as well. Coastal sharks have also shown up in the area.

Wachapreague

At the Wachapreague Marina, bluefin tuna and mako shark have been reported by those fishing offshore. Inshore, flounder fishing has been okay, but not great. Black sea bass fishing has also been decent.

Staff at Captain Zed's reports that flounder are still around, but there are few keepers. On June 5th, one boat hooked 29 flounder, but only 4 were large enough to keep.

Cape Charles

According to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle, anglers have been catching decent flounder by Buoy 42 near the Cell. Sea mullet were biting near Kiptopeke, specifically near the Cabbage Patch. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Chesapeake Light Tower were producing spadefish. Near Buoy 13, a 51-pound cobia was landed. Surf fishing for red drum has been okay, and the peeler run has slowed. There were reports of small striped bass by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and croaker were biting in the area at both Morley's Wharf and the Concrete Ships.

An 18-inch croaker was caught from the dock at Cherrystone Bait and Tackle last week. Small flounder were hooked as well, but none were keepers.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

While no citations were reported from Cobb's Marina last week, anglers were finding a variety of fish in the area. Spanish mackerel were biting, and cobia were found around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel. Spadefish were caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, and keeper flounder were landed at the 2nd and 3rd islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Croaker were biting at the Monitor Merrimac and Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnels, according to staff at the Sunset Boating Center. A 37-inch cobia was also reported. At the high rise of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, spadefish and cobia were biting.

At Salt Ponds Marina, anglers reported croaker catches from the beach and from the Bluefish Rock area. Last weekend, one boat reported 12 keeper flounder at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Staff at the York River Fishing Center reported catches of croaker and small flounder at the Gloucester Point Pier. Large croaker have shown up around Cheatham Annex, and the cobia bite has started in the bay.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Cobia have entered the mix in force. Massive brown fish are being caught throughout the lower bay. The western side of the bay, Grandview, the Rock Pile, and Bluefish Rock specifically, have been very good for anglers anchored up on a chum slick. Sight casting has been productive at the mouth of the bay. Spanish mackerel have also entered the bay with fish being caught from Back River Reef to York Spit. The drum bite continues. The black drum bite is now an occasional fish but the run of large red drum remains very good. They can be caught by trolling spoons around the shoals at the mouth of the bay and along the ocean front during the day and by anchoring in these same areas and fishing bait at night. Some lucky anglers have encountered large schools of these fish during the daytime. When that happens, sight casting to them is the way to go. Flounder fishing has been good.

Anglers fishing live bait on hard structures in the bay have managed some limits of trophy-sized flounder. The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel has been the hot area for this. Black sea bass fishing is good over the inshore wrecks like those at the Triangle Reef. Spadefish are being caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower, but the bite on structures in the bay has been slow. There have been some catches at Wolftrap and the Cell, but not many have been caught yet. Some nice speckled trout are still being caught in the Mobjack Bay area. Offshore waters are still on the cold side off of Virginia. There have been a few bluefin tuna encountered on the inshore humps like the Hot Dog and 26-Mile Hill, and there have been some dolphin caught by boats willing to make very long runs. Offshore bottom fishing for tilefish, black sea bass, and other critters of the deep has been good. To our south, some nice yellowfin catches have been made out of Oregon Inlet along with some very good dolphin fishing.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The summer-time fishing trend is still on the rise, with cobia as the main attraction this week. Catches are improving each day and so are the sizes. The folks at Bayside Bait and Tackle report that cobia are popping up everywhere, and some of these fish are big, with several weighing from 60 to 100 pounds this week. Fish are taking bait from both chummers and top water casters. Bottom anglers are finding action off of Back River, Grand View, and Buckroe, as well as the Latimer and the Nine Foot Shoal areas. Keith Cole of Virginia Beach took the lead in the state when he tricked a 105-pound monster with bunker while chumming this week.

Although still available, red drum are losing popularity as more species debut in the Bay. Bulls are still active off Fisherman's Island and near Buoy 10, where the best action is occurring after dark. Black drum are on the downside of their early season bite, but fish are still hitting near Buoy 10, mixed in with red drum.

On other fronts, spadefish are schooled around most nearshore and bay structures. The most popular spot is still the Chesapeake Light Tower, although reports indicate that divers are beginning to interrupt much of the action. Most fish are ranging around 6 pounds. Nice trigger fish are beginning to take residence on most any inshore structure, as well as along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Sheepshead have yet to really transpire, but hopefully this will change soon.

If Spanish mackerel is your pleasure, these fish are making a great introduction along the ocean front and on up to the Middle Bay areas. Cape Henry is the hot spot this week. Plenty of keeper-sized Spanish are chasing small Clark spoons in 30 to 50 feet of water. Gold is reported as the best color recently. These fish offer good, fast action. Watch for their close cousin, the king mackerel, to make its debut soon.

The flounder scene could use a boost. Boats are finding steady action with undersized fish, but keepers are still not the norm. Those working hard for their fish are finding a few doormats coming from the Bay Bridge structure, Oyster, and the Cell areas. Live bait is working best for the bigger flatfish.

Reports of puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still coming from within Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets

and the Elizabeth River, with an outgoing tide offering the best results. According to Steve at Long Bay Pointe Bait and Tackle, cut mullet is the best bait. Decent croaker and 3- to 8-pound bluefish are available near the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, while smallish croaker are also biting off Ocean View and around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Rich at Ocean's East 2 tells of hand-sized spot available off of Sewell's Point and Little Creek Inlet lately.

Nice black sea bass are hitting on many mid-range and nearshore structures and wrecks. Jigs and squid will work well for these tasty fish. Several varieties of deep water bottom fish are active in water ranging from 300 to 800 feet. Grouper, blueline tilefish, black belly rosefish, and the much coveted golden tilefish are possibilities.

Things are beginning to look up for the offshore season. One boat from the Fishing Center returned from trolling the Canyon with 13 yellowfin tuna ranging up to 40 pounds and several gaffer dolphin this week.

Virginia Middle Bay

Jett's Hardware staff reports that anglers have seen the large croaker bite continue this week. A few bluefish are starting to show up for the trollers.

According to Dan, of Smiths Point Marina, striped bass have been shrinking lately, and numbers have been average. Large croaker are in the deeper parts of the rivers, and flounder can be found around the jetties.

Staff at Garrett's Marina has seen croaker averaging two pounds being landed in the area. The White Stone Bridge has been the hot spot for striped bass.

Capt. Jim Thompson reports the croaker are in the bay now with sizes up to 18 inches. There were good catches in the Rappahannock River near Waterview. A few flounder were reported at the Cell, and spot were reported near Gwynn's Island and in the Rappahannock River.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Waters continue to warm as bay surface temps near the Cell have reached 72 degrees. A few spadefish were caught at the Cell and Wolf Trap this weekend. The bite has just begun! Fresh clams perform best with Fish Bites (clam or bloodworm flavor) as back up.

The creeks and rivers are full of croaker. Saturday, the majority of boats were above the White Stone Bridge after spot and croaker, so apparently, the croaker are late in leaving the main rivers and moving into the bay this year.

Speckled trout continue biting in the Piankatank River and in the Mobjack Bay. We registered one citation this week—a big speck that weighed almost 8 lbs. Other good catches were reported as the full moon prompts the second major crab shedding.

The ratio of flounder throw-backs to keepers has dropped somewhat. The bigger fish are arriving, but

it is still tough fishing. This appears to be state-wide as only 28 citations had been registered in Virginia as of last Wednesday. We normally register 4 or 5 citations at our store by the end of the first week of June. Thus far, in 2009, we have registered only one. There seem to be more keepers on the west side of the bay this year, so more people can fish closer to home and have a chance to keep dinner. There have been keepers caught in the mouth of the Rappahannock and around Gwynn's Island on moving tides. A long strip of squid (6 to 10 inches) with a minnow on the same hook works well and is a big enough bait to ward off the small croaker. Long-cut croaker strips also work well.

Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) have entered our waters and can be caught over hard bottom by fishing peelers under popping corks or Gulp Jerk baits or curl tailed grubs on light jigs. Other soft plastics, such as Saltwater Bass Assassins, on jigs have also produced.

Virginia Beach

According to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, a mixed bag of numerous flounder, with many keepers, spot, puppy drum (juvenile red drum), speckled trout, bluefish, striped bass, and croaker in Rudee Inlet. Off the beach, croaker, taylor bluefish, and Spanish mackerel were found, and spadefish and cobia were hitting hard in the bay. Offshore boats brought in yellowfin tuna and dolphin last week.

Little news offshore as of yet, but in the bay, sheepshead and keeper flounder were landed. Staff expects the offshore action to heat up any day.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Fishing Pier, anglers caught numerous croaker in the 1.5- to 2-pound range. Flounder were caught as well, and the keeper rate was around 50%. Numerous small bluefish were landed, and two black drum were caught last week (ranging from 30 to 40 pounds). Spot are beginning to slowly show, and a few Spanish mackerel have also shown up.

Anglers were catching sea mullet, spot, a few small croaker, and a lot of blue crabs at the Lynnhaven Pier last week. Overnight, bluefish were caught. Small flounder were also landed, a few of which were keeper-sized.

At Virginia Beach Pier, a mixed bag of Spanish mackerel, pan-sized spot, small speckled trout, sea mullet were available. Some striped bass, small flounder, and a few croaker were also mixed in.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier at Sandbridge, spot, bluefish, sea mullet, red drum, and Spanish mackerel were caught. Some undersized flounder were landed as well.

At the new Buckroe Fishing Pier, anglers brought up Spanish mackerel, croaker, and undersized flounder.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to be strong with a large percentage of anglers catching

their limits of dolphin. The tuna, both blackfin and yellowfin, continue to have a strong bite as well as wahoo, amberjack, tilefish, and members of the snapper/grouper families. Billfishing continued to improve last week, and stronger numbers should show in the near future as the bite is very strong south of Hatteras. Mid-range fishermen saw their catches drop over the past week, with a few king mackerel and black sea bass to show for their efforts. Near shore, anglers had their best luck trolling for Spanish mackerel and bluefish. Anglers fishing from the shore and piers could catch bluefish and Spanish mackerel by throwing metal spoons beyond the breakers, and bottom fishing was producing spot, croaker, puffers, and sea mullet. The flounder are starting to radiate from the inlet, so sound fishermen should be able to pick them up occasionally while they chase the speckled trout and red drum, which have been biting very well.

South of Oregon Inlet, the bite has slowed some for those fishing the surf with some sea mullet being caught around Ramp 38, along with flounder, sheepshead, and triggerfish at Ramp 49. Earlier in the week, Spanish mackerel and cobia were caught on the southern beaches.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet has been good with dolphin leading the headlines. King mackerel and wahoo were also around, although they were scattered. The billfishing has improved with many boats targeting them due to the Big Rock Tournament, in Morehead City. Blue marlin and sailfish were seen by these anglers. Inshore waters produced Spanish mackerel, speckled trout, grey trout, and cobia.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.








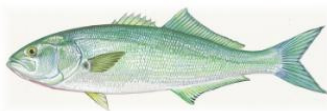
ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The header includes the commission's name and logo. The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and includes a welcome message. It features two prominent announcements: "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and "New 2008 Tautog Regs". A sidebar on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008, including members, trips, and catches. At the bottom, there are links for "Related Links" and "Help".

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008

Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

Related Links

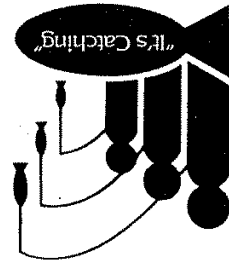
VMRC introduces the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

Launched in February, 2009, in conjunction with the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the VMRC has placed collection bins for monofilament fishing line across the state. Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for fish, birds, marine mammals, and boaters by depositing any used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers (see photo). Several of our Saltwater Review partners have placed bins at their locations including Captain Bob's Marina, Chris' Bait and Tackle, the Ocean View Fishing Pier, Jett's Hardware and the NOW OPEN Buckroe Fishing Pier in Hampton. If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new bin locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

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